

cityscene

What's happening in the City of Fairfax

FEBRUARY 2021



The renovated Lanier Middle School library includes comfortable, new furniture that can be easily rearranged.

Renovated Library Moves Students into the Future

In the winter of 2019, Lanier Middle School Principal Dr. Tammara Hanna and librarians Sophia Wells-Williams and Nancy Bronez realized the school library was not being used to its fullest potential. Two years ago, thanks to funding from the City Schools, every Lanier student received a laptop, which eliminated the need for a traditional computer lab. But the library was still cluttered with large tables and desks which had been used as computer stations, and the furniture was old and uncomfortable. The learning space was stuck in the past.

At the January 2020 City School Board work session, Dr. Hanna and Wells-Williams presented potential innovations to the school board with detailed plans to renovate the library. Their idea was to create a space similar to a college student union that would fit with how students in 2020 and beyond prefer to learn. They made the case for an updated library that would accommodate more people at one time, encourage research and collaboration, and better serve the school community. Their plans included:

- Maximizing space for students to collaborate and conduct research
- Modernizing the computer lab with spaces for students to sit and work in small groups
- Replacing the bulky, heavy furniture with furniture that is easy to move and assemble, making it easier for community

users and organizations to adapt the space to their preferences and use.

Thinking ahead and waiting for the right time to realize the dream of a modern, collaborative space, Dr. Hanna saved money, solicited donations from the community, and worked with the city school board and Fairfax County Public Schools to secure \$75,000 for the project. The school was already budgeted to receive new carpet, tile, and paint in 2020 as part of the City Schools Capital Improvement Program, and the library had been closed since March due to the pandemic. The right time to update the library had arrived.

With new carpet and freshly-painted walls, the library transformed into an open-space learning center complete with charging stations. The updated library includes new collaboration spaces with new furniture. The size of the circulation desk was reduced to create more space. New whiteboards were installed for teachers to work with small groups of students. The librarians audited the books to ensure they were relevant to students in 2021.

"As a teacher-librarian, I am thrilled to use this newly renovated space to partner with teachers of all content areas," said Wells-Williams. "In the past, I've had students reference the library as their haven or sanctuary. I'm proud to be part of this renovation,

which made the space more inviting and will enable our library to be a haven for even more students in our Lanier community."

"Like our downtown is the heart of the City of Fairfax, our library has now become the heart of our school," said Dr. Hanna. "We are excited to see how our 21st century learners are able to develop their skills in this new, collaborative and welcoming environment."

(The City of Fairfax School Board voted in October 2020 to change the name of Lanier Middle School to Katherine Johnson Middle School. The new name will go into effect this summer.)

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CITY NEWS

City Government Offices Holiday Closures

Monday, February 15 - George Washington's Day

City government offices: closed
General District Court: closed
CUE Bus: modified weekday schedule
**No refuse and recycling service;
Monday and Tuesday routes collected
Tuesday, February 16**

Please note: Collecting multiple days' worth of debris (yard waste, brush, metals, etc.) on a single day may cause delays in collection. Please leave items at the curb until they are collected. Information: RefuseRecycling@fairfaxva.gov, 703-385-7837.

2020 Business Recycling Report Due March 1

City business owners are asked to electronically submit their annual business recycling report to the city by March 1 using a form on the city website. *Information: 703-385-7995.*

The report details actual or estimated weight or volume of recycled materials provided by recycling vendors.

Commercial property owners who provide recycling services for their tenants must submit the information on behalf of those tenants. Home-based businesses do not submit reports because their information already is included in the city's annual municipal recycling report.

Women of Influence; Nominations Accepted Until March 1

The City of Fairfax Commission for Women is seeking nominations for the 2021 Women of Influence Award. This gives you the opportunity to recognize and celebrate some of the outstanding women who live in the city and have made a significant impact on the lives of city residents.

Nominations are accepted through March 1. To submit a nomination, fill out the online nomination form at fairfaxva.gov (search "Women of Influence").
Who is eligible?

- The nominee must be a resident of the City of Fairfax.
- The work for which the nominee is being nominated must benefit residents of the City of Fairfax.
- Elected officials or candidates for office are not eligible.
- You may nominate a group of women (defined as two or more women) for an award.
- You may nominate only one person/group per form. Complete a separate form to submit a nomination for an additional person or group.

Information: fairfaxva.gov (search "Women of Influence"), 703-385-7894.

**WEAR A
MASK.
SAVE LIVES.**

HCA INOVA NOVANT HEALTH UVA VIRGINIA HOSPITAL CENTER
#MaskUpNOVA

COVID-19 INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

City of Fairfax

fairfaxva.gov/coronavirus
WeCare@fairfaxva.gov
703-385-7800

Text FXCCOVID19 to 888-777 for
City of Fairfax-related information
and updates (visit fairfaxva.gov/coronavirus
for email option)

Fairfax County Health Department
(City's public health services provider)
fairfaxcounty.gov/covid19
703-267-3511

Text FFXCVID to 888-777 for
Fairfax Health District information
and updates (visit fairfaxcounty.gov/covid19
for email option)

Virginia Department of Health
vdh.virginia.gov 877-ASK-VDH3

**CDC, Centers
for Disease Control
and Prevention** cdc.gov

**In case of
emergency,
dial 911**



CURIOUS CITIZENS

**Why do I have to pay a late fee?
I was only three days late and
I never got a bill!**

Assessing late payment fees is not at the discretion of local treasurers. The Virginia tax code mandates that late payments incur late payment fees. Very few conditions exist under which the code permits a waiver of late payment fees and, unfortunately, not receiving a bill is not one of them. In fact, not receiving a bill is specifically identified as a non-valid reason to waive penalties. The extremely limited number of waivers issued by the city are for taxpayers who can prove with supporting documentation that they were hospitalized on a payment due date. Virginia is very strict.

Because the Code of Virginia is so stringent, and the penalties severe, in addition to mailing tax bills, the Treasurer's Office notifies residents of due dates in the newspaper, on the city website, *Cityscene* newsletter, Channel 12, and via City Alert (subscribe today at fairfaxva.gov). Reminder notices are mailed to those who have unpaid balances five days before the tax due date, and those with unpaid real estate tax balances receive a phone call two business days before the tax due date.



**Are you a Mason alum
with a business in the city?
We want to hear from you.**

**Contact
economicdevelopment@fairfaxva.gov**



GETTING TO KNOW CAROLYN PITCHES CHAIRMAN, CITY OF FAIRFAX SCHOOL BOARD

Why do you serve on the school board? I am serving on the board to ensure that all city students receive the education they are entitled to and deserve, complete with relevant and meaningful learning experiences that are provided in exceptional facilities. This includes an education that is equitable and rich in resources for every city student. I serve to be an advocate for our students and families.

What one thing do you want to accomplish during this term? During this term, I hope to continue our work to resolve the capacity issues at Providence Elementary School by partnering with the Fairfax County Public Schools Board and leadership to find an expedited and reasona-

ble solution. Our board is also evaluating our buildings and facilities to determine renovation needs, as well as gaining support for the repairs and renovations.

What do you love most about city schools and the city? What I love most about our city schools are the students, faculty, and staff! I love visiting the schools and seeing and interacting with the students. We have some of the most talented people working in our schools. What I love about the city is how much our residents love and support our schools and work to make our city a better place.

What is one thing you want people to know about you? The one thing



I want people to know about me is that I am also a mother and a teacher, and I empathize with all of our parents, students, and school faculty and staff during this incredibly difficult time. While it may not always be outwardly visible, I am working hard to advocate for our families.

COUNCIL REPORTER

PLEASE NOTE: summaries have been edited. To read the full Council Reporter, visit fairfaxva.gov and click on "City Meetings."

COUNCIL ACTIONS OF DECEMBER 8, 2020

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approved, unanimously: Consideration of a resolution authorizing the extension of the Dockless Mobility Scooter Pilot Program; and introduction of an ordinance approving and authorizing a license agreement between the City of Fairfax and Jim McKay Chevrolet, Inc., for the temporary use of certain real property acquired by the city pursuant to a Certificate of Take filed in connection with the Northfax East (University Drive extended) project. *(Councilmember Yi was absent.)*

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- Public hearing for the Judicial Drive Trail Connection. *(No action taken.)*
- Approved, unanimously, the City of Fairfax 2021 Legislative Program and authorizing resolution. *(Councilmember Yi was absent.)*
- Approved, unanimously, to move to introduce, under emergency ordinance procedures of the City Charter, and enact an ordinance, authorizing the payment of one-time bonuses to eligible city employees. *(Councilmember Yi was absent.)*

ITEMS NOT REQUIRING A PUBLIC HEARING

- Approved, to accept the City of Fairfax FY 2020 *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report* presented this evening. *(Councilmember Yi was absent.)*

Agendas Available on the City Website

Visit the city's homepage and click on "City Meetings" to read minutes from City Council, School Board, and Planning Commission meetings, and to view proposed agendas for upcoming meetings.



UPDATE

Connecting Fairfax City for All, the initiative to study racial and social equity in the city, is moving forward. Several important actions have been taken since city council's approval of the initiative on October 27, 2020. Join the conversation at engage.fairfaxva.gov.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP SELECTION

More than 80 people applied to serve on the 15-member stakeholder group, which will facilitate community voices and make recommendations to the mayor and city council based on feedback gathered throughout the process. (Appointments were announced January 12, after *The Cityscene* went to press.) Three slots were reserved for Matthew West, Historic Fairfax City, Inc.; Susan Olenchuk, Mosby Woods Community Association; and Laura Bowles, Neighbors for Change.

FIRST COMMUNITY LISTENING AND LEARNING SESSIONS

- **7 p.m., Thursday, February 4.** Kim Holien, retired military historian for the Department of the Army, will present "Fairfax Court House: Crossroads of Conflict." This program will set up the historical context for later sessions. A question and answer session will follow the presentation.
- **7 p.m., Thursday, February 11.** Dr. Karen L. Cox, professor of history at the University of North Carolina, will focus on "The Lost Cause and Confederate Monuments and Memory." Facilitated discussion will follow her presentation.



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HELPING HANDS



MARK ANGRES

CHAIR, CITY OF

FAIRFAX PLANNING COMMISSION

How many years have you lived in the city? I've lived in the city for eight and a half years.

Why do you serve as a planning commission volunteer? I believe that it is important to serve the community. By day, I practice intellectual property law, but I've always had an interest in urban planning – how we enhance our communities both through the built environment and the

services we provide, such as schools and transportation. Because the planning commission is the gatekeeper for citywide planning, I relish the opportunity to be involved in doing something that interests me.

Describe the relationship between the planning commission and city council?

The planning commission serves in an advisory role to the city council. For example, when new developments are proposed in the city, the commission first vets the proposal and then makes a recommendation to city council as to whether the development is consistent with the city's comprehensive plan.

Why is the planning commission's work important to the city?

The planning commission is charged with looking out for the general welfare of the city and plays an important role because it drafts and adopts the city's comprehensive plan. This plan is forward-looking and presents the vision for the city in land use, education, housing, economic development, parks and recreation, environmental sustainability, and historic preservation, among other areas. Thus, the commission's work greatly influences the character of the city in both what is built around us and on the services the city provides.

How does the planning commission affect economic development? Economic development and city planning are inexorably linked. Land use decisions from the commission affect future commercial development, potential job creation, and housing. All of these can contribute to strengthening economic vitality in the city.

Is there an upcoming project you're most excited about? Earlier this year the planning commission and city council approved two small area plans for Old Town Fairfax and the Northfax area of the city (intersection of Route 123 and Fairfax Boulevard, Route 29/50).

I'm excited to get to work on satisfying the goals of these plans. I'm hopeful that each plan will bring updated and modern development that includes open space and thoughtful pedestrian-oriented design.

Do you volunteer with any other organizations? Right now, most of my volunteer time is spent on work with the commission. However, I was the commission's representative to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in 2019 and was a member of the Board of Architectural Review from 2014-2017.



THE CITY NEEDS PEOPLE LIKE YOU

Board of Architectural Review (one vacancy); **Board of Building Code Appeals** (one mechanical or plumbing vacancy); **Board of Zoning Appeals** (one vacancy); **Community Appearance Committee** (three vacancies: two city resident, one Garden Club representative); **Personnel Advisory Board** (one vacancy); **Planning Commission** (one vacancy); **Regional Advisory Social Services Board** (one vacancy).

To apply, visit fairfaxva.gov and search "boards and vacancies," or call 703-385-7935.

GIVING H.O.P.E. TO THE HOMELESS

The pandemic has been hard on everyone, but people experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable. As the mercury drops, hypothermia shelters historically have provided a warm place to spend the night. However, due to public health concerns, there are fewer locations this year. Local churches are not participating, and The Lamb Center, which is not a 24-hour facility, is limiting the number of guests to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Fortunately, a new program is giving the homeless H.O.P.E.

H.O.P.E., Having One Positive Encounter, is a new program created through a partnership among the City of Fairfax Police Department, City of Fairfax Human Services Division, and The Lamb Center. Through H.O.P.E., police officers from the D2 Squad provide survival kits to those experiencing homelessness encountered while on patrol. Each kit includes a hat, gloves, scarf, wool socks, first-aid kits, hand-warmers, blanket, and a backpack. Kits also include helpful information about available services and resources.

"We work together with the police to try to convince those without shelter to come to us or the hypothermia prevention shelter, but this does not always work. These survival kits will protect those individuals who remain outside in the cold," said Deacon Dave Larrabee, director of operations, The Lamb Center.

The need for the survival kits was first recognized by Officer Noelle Becker. She was at a FACETS food distribution event, speaking to a man experiencing homelessness who had no blanket to keep him warm for the night. "We realized that there are individuals who, due to COVID-19, would not have as much access to shelter during the winter months," said Becker.

Human Services Director Lesley Abashian purchased most of the supplies using CARES Act funding. Continuing its Christmas tradition of assisting others, the Commission for Women purchased the socks. "H.O.P.E. provides police officers a way to support residents experiencing homelessness during the pandemic. The goal is for each police cruiser to have these H.O.P.E. packs with them to be



Police officers provide winter survival kits to people experiencing homelessness.

given out as needed," explains Abashian.

Officer Charles Mills, the police liaison to The Lamb Center, encounters two or three people experiencing homelessness every day. He learns who needs assistance and works with Abashian and Larrabee to coordinate services.

The police department's efforts to use its resources to improve lives throughout the city is making a difference. "This newfound cooperation with other city services, along with amazing support from our chief and command staff, has inspired officers to think of all their options when dealing with the homeless," said Officer

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After

Restoring the Stafford Drive Stream

The north fork of Accotink Creek between Plantation Parkway and Ranger Road Park, known locally as the Stafford Drive stream, is in bad shape. Over the years, fast-flowing stormwater has scoured the streambed away and incised the stream banks, creating steep cliffs that prevent water from reaching the floodplain. Healthy, mature trees are collapsing into the stream due to severe erosion, and sediment washed downstream is burying



Before

Incised stream banks are visible at the Stafford Drive stream (before). Within a few years, nature has hidden any sign of construction activity at this example of a restored stream (after).

aquatic habitat. During rain events, fast-flowing water rips through the channel and, with nothing to dissipate the water's energy, existing erosion problems worsen.

Starting next summer, the City of Fairfax will restore nearly a half mile of the Stafford Drive stream. The principles of *Natural Channel Design* will be used to stabilize the stream to prevent further erosion and reconnect the stream to the floodplain. Natural materials incorporated in the design, such as rocks and logs, will slow down rushing stormwater and restore the natural meander found in stable streams.

The Stafford Drive stream was identified as a high priority for restoration in the 2007 Accotink Creek Stream Stability Assessment. The \$2.3 million project was approved in the FY21 budget and included in the FY2022-26 Capital Improvement Program. The design is 30 percent complete, and a grant application will be submitted to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality for funding support. If awarded, the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF) grant will cover half the cost.

Stream characteristics change naturally over time, but streams must be managed in urbanized areas to protect public and private property and infrastructure, such as under-

ground sanitary sewer lines in stream valleys, and to meet state and federal regulatory requirements that protect water quality. The Stafford Drive stream restoration project will provide significant credit toward meeting the city's Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) goals.

The city's Chesapeake Bay TMDL action plan is designed to reduce excess nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) and total suspended solids (loose sediment caused by erosion). Stormwater management projects like the Stafford Drive stream restoration help achieve these reduction targets.

The majority of streams in the city drain into Accotink Creek, which flows into the Potomac and the Bay. The city's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer (MS4) Permit authorizes the city to discharge stormwater into state-owned surface waters. Under this permit, the city is required to develop, implement, and enforce the MS4 program to reduce the discharge of pollutants and protect water quality. In other words, Fairfax City is responsible for the quality of water that flows out of the city.

Stormwater management has evolved over the years. Traditionally, the goal was to convey stormwater away from homes and businesses as quickly as possible to prevent flooding. Stormwater is funneled through a network of pipes and concrete ditches to the nearest stream. The development of neighborhoods, streets, and commercial areas has increased impermeable surfaces (hard surfaces that do not allow water to penetrate the ground). This approach has taken its toll on streams over the years, and erosion problems are exacerbated by more intense rain events associated with climate change.

Modern stormwater management best practices include facilities that slow, store, and filter runoff. The city's rain gardens, underground storage tanks, detention ponds, and fortified outfalls are designed to reduce the volume and velocity of stormwater and to remove pollutants before the stormwater reaches the stream.

The Stafford Drive stream was selected for restoration because of existing conditions, future erosion potential, the opportunity to reconnect the stream to the floodplain, and construction accessibility. Stream restoration projects repair years of unintentional abuse, restore ecological functions in the stream valley, and improve recreational experiences for residents.

As with any construction project, there will be temporary disruption, and it may be uncomfortable. Some trees will need to be removed, but the city will make every effort to save trees. Native plantings will be installed, but they will need time to take root and flourish. Some benefits of stream restoration are realized immediately – stable conditions and improved water quality – while others require patience. In three to five years, nature will have hidden any signs of a construction project. Restoring the stream now is an investment in the city's future and allows the city to meet its water quality obligations.

GIVING H.O.P.E. TO THE HOMELESS

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Charles Mills. This connection has improved coordination with The Lamb Center, enhanced communication with business owners, and allowed the police to arrange short-term stays in local rooms for at-risk people. The police are able to proactively help people in need rather than just reacting.

If you see a person who appears to be experiencing homelessness, call the police non-emergency number at 703-385-7924. An officer will be dispatched to conduct a welfare check, to determine if the person requires medical assistance or a ride to a shelter. "We want to make sure everybody is safe, comfortable, and warm during the winter months," said Mills.



5 MINUTES WITH ...

LINDA LEIGHTLEY DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF REVENUE



Linda Leightley received recognition for her 35 years of service to the city Office of the Commissioner of the Revenue.

In what year did you begin working for the city? I began working for the city in August 1985. I saw an advertisement in a local newspaper for a part-time position to administer the city's new meals tax.

What is the "big picture" of your role? I am the Chief Deputy Commissioner of the Revenue for the City of Fairfax. The office is responsible for and administers personal property, business license, meals, lodging, and state income taxes. The office has a limited Division of Motor Vehicles Service center for titles and vehicle registration.

What should residents know about your office? The office is open five days a week, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and located in City Hall on Armstrong Street. DMV Select Services are available from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays. Currently, the office is open by appointment only due to COVID-19.

What other positions have you held in the city? I was business revenue inspector from 1985 until 1990.

What changes in city government have you witnessed during your 35-year career? I have seen significant expansion in services and offices in the city government including the Historic Resources Office, Parks and Recreation, Community Development, and many more. I have lived in the city since 1976 and have seen the population grow from around 18,000 to more than 24,000. The city-owned infrastructure has significantly changed, including a city hall annex, police station, a second fire station, the Sherwood Center, establishment of a senior center, and upgrades at all the city schools. The most significant change in Fairfax City government has been in the information technology world. This includes establishment of email system, websites,

automated assessing, electronic data storage and revival systems, and automated information distribution capabilities. Thirty-five years ago there were no computers. All assessments were hand-typed.

What changes around the city have you seen? I have witnessed significant growth in residential property including Farrcroft, Pickets Reserve, and most recently, Scout on the Circle. This expansion is continuing with the development of Northfax. Also, there has been significant expansion of city commercial property including office buildings, retail malls, and the Old Town area. The city has been very dynamic in the last 35 years.

What was Fairfax City like 35 years ago? It was a small town in a major metro area. You knew your neighbors and city staff, as well as the mayor and city council. In some respects, this is still true today, but COVID-19 has complicated this.

Why do you love your job? I love my job because the office emphasizes customer service. Assisting our Fairfax City residents and acting on their behalf to resolve their federal and Virginia Income tax, personal property, and DMV and business licensing issues. Our office is very friendly.

Why do you love working for the city? It's close to my home, which is about one and a half miles from city hall. I know many of the residents and city staff on a personal basis through my work and participation in community activities and organizations. All three of my children have gone through city schools and have in the past worked for the city. My son has been on the city police force for 28 years and is a detective and computer forensics specialist.



FIRST RESPONDERS IN ACTION

Access to Blood a FACT*R in Survival

If you or a loved one is involved in a serious accident, wouldn't you like to be sure there is blood available to save your life?

The FACT*R (Field Available Component Transfusion Response) program stores donated blood at Fairfax Hospital until it is needed at an accident scene. Currently, this blood is reserved for extremely rare incidents in which a person is stuck inside a vehicle and their removal



requires a long time.

FACT*R began after a September 2017 vehicle accident in Loudoun County, in which five patients were trapped and required blood to be delivered to the scene. An after-action report revealed a need for a more streamlined program to deliver life-saving blood products to the scene of traumatic events.

Soon, City of Fairfax Fire Department paramedic units will begin carrying blood. This new development will enable first responders to provide blood immediately instead of waiting for blood to arrive at the

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BEHIND THE BADGE Beyond Protecting and Serving

The City of Fairfax Police Department recently launched a new initiative to strengthen its relationship with the community it serves. P.O.L.I.C.E. (Public Outreach Liaisons Invested in Community Engagement) was created to forge lifelong connections between the community and the police department through mutual empathy and respect. P.O.L.I.C.E. strives to accomplish this through the ongoing exchange of innovative ideas, bringing awareness of the profession of policing to stakeholders, while emphasizing common humanity.

You may be familiar with some of the ways in which P.O.L.I.C.E. connects with the community. The team leads roundtable discussions, participates in youth group programs, brings McGruff the Crime Dog to events, participates in National Night Out, attends senior center and HOA programs – and P.O.L.I.C.E. led the popular Trunk or Treat Halloween event last fall.



Hand-Sewn Masks Bring Smiles to Covered Faces

Do you know a City Samaritan? Please share their story with us at WeCare@fairfaxva.gov.



Stacie Bicknell and her family – Molly, Bruce, and Charlie – show off their custom masks. (photo by Micha Cook).

Mable Hills resident Stacie Bicknell has sewn more than 1,200 face-masks since the pandemic began. Her creative fabric choices have made wearing masks fun for people of all ages. Using proceeds from her mask sales, Bicknell has donated more than 200 yards of fabric and a few dozen spools of thread to others who make and donate masks.

"No one really likes wearing a mask, but Stacie has made it fun and interesting, which helps people stay safe, keep others safe, and deal with an otherwise not-so-fun pandemic," said friend Janet Jaworski.

Bicknell's mask-making enterprise was born of necessity. When the pandemic began, she wanted to protect her family, and she had the time and material to sew masks for them. Bicknell dug out her sewing machine, which had been in storage since before her two children were born. She dusted off the sewing skills she had learned in quilting classes more than two decades ago and experimented with patterns she found online. "After many trials and adjustments, I came up with the pattern that works for me," says Bicknell.

Each mask takes 20-30 minutes to

make. Bicknell's masks are colorful, playful, clever, and some feature colorful statements about the pandemic. She buys most of her fabric at the Quilter's Studio in Fair City Mall, where she says she's "like a kid in a candy store." Masks featuring the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg have been the most popular design. "In general, the more fun the print, the more popular it is," says Bicknell. She made masks for Halloween and Christmas, and she's working on masks for Valentine's Day. If the pandemic stretches into spring, she'll be ready with new masks featuring spring bugs and flowers, as well as sports and beach masks. "If you have to wear a mask, it may as well be cute!" she exclaims.

Bicknell modestly claims she "is no seamstress." The care card included with each mask even states that masks are sewn with "unintentional imperfections." However, after she shared a photo on social media of her family's masks, the requests from friends to make them masks began trickling in. Bicknell then created a Facebook group called Stacie's Masks, which has grown to 500 members. "It's not only a place I can show new masks, but it has

turned into its own little community," says Bicknell. The mask mandate led to many new friends, and she received a group Christmas gift from members located throughout the country who only knew each other because of the Facebook group. "That was pretty amazing!" she says.

In addition to selling masks, Bicknell has donated masks to service workers, school cafeteria workers, delivery drivers, and others working on the front lines. If she sees essential workers wearing ill-fitting masks, she has a stash of masks in her car to share. "At this point, there's no excuse for anyone to have a mask that doesn't fit properly," she explains.

Bicknell says it is very satisfying and warms her heart to see people wearing her masks. "It's wonderful to have a feeling of purpose! People keep telling me they started a conversation with someone because they were wearing a mask I made. That always makes me smile, that they had a connection, just because of a fabric mask," she says.

Selling and giving away masks isn't the only way Bicknell is lifting up the community. A year ago, she and Lissette McNair started *Give Freely, Fairfax City*, a Facebook group created to "bring fellow city residents together through thoughtful gifting, lending, sharing, and expressions of gratitude with the hope of building a stronger and more connected community." The group promotes minimizing waste, and members are encouraged to post items they want to give away. "In a time when people aren't able to physically be together, it's been amazing to watch our group grow and see the connections and friendships being made along the way," says Bicknell. "Members often post pictures of their new-to-them items being used in their new homes, giving thanks to the previous owner. It's been a silver lining for many of us!"

ACCESS TO BLOOD

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accident scene. This blood will be available to anyone in need, not just someone who is trapped. "There also is the probability of the city being a regional asset to assist county units who may have a patient who requires blood," said Tyler McLaurin, master fire medic, City of Fairfax Fire Department.

Stockpiles of donated blood can be depleted quickly. Even just one accident may use up available blood. Residents can and do help by donating blood regularly. One hundred twenty-seven blood products were col-

lected during the last four City of Fairfax blood drives, but more blood is always needed. According to the INOVA Blood Services website, approximately 200 donors must donate blood, red cells, platelets, and plasma every day to support the diverse needs of the patients in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Follow city social media for upcoming opportunities to donate blood.

"Blood is practically the only live-saving tool in our arsenal that we cannot artificially create in a lab. It requires the compassion of others to donate, and the impact it makes in potentially saving a life is so invaluable," said Orndoff.



Donated blood stored in special coolers is ready to be delivered to an accident scene.

Mayor David L. Meyer

City Council

Joseph D. Harmon

So P. Lim

Janice B. Miller

D. Thomas Ross

Jon R. Stehle Jr.

Sang H. Yi

City Manager Rob Stalzer



contact us

WeCare@fairfaxva.gov

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To report a problem or request a service, please use Fairfax City Resolve. Look for the "Report" button on fairfaxva.gov.



BUDGET REVIEW BEGINS FEBRUARY 23

Help the mayor and city council determine the city's financial priorities by participating in the annual budget review. The review begins when City Manager Rob Stalzer presents the proposed budget during the February 23 council meeting.

Following the presentation, copies of the proposed budget will be available at fairfaxva.gov/budget. A limited number of copies are available in print, upon request; call 703-385-7870.

The city continues to seek public input until council adopts the final budget May 5. The budget is a detailed description of how taxpayer money is spent. It explains the city's goals, proposed programs, and activities for that fiscal year.

Review the proposed budget and provide feedback at engage.fairfaxva.gov. From the city homepage, click on the "Engage" button.



FY2020 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

Read the city's *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report* for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2020.

The Code of the Commonwealth of Virginia requires all local governments to be audited each year with a report to the governing body. The CAFR fulfills this requirement. The financial statements included in the report earned a "clean" audit opinion. The FY2020 CAFR report is now available on fairfaxva.gov (search "CAFR").

CITY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA PROPOSED BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022

FY 2022 BUDGET REVIEW SCHEDULE

February 23 – FY2022 Proposed Budget Presentation

March 2 – City Council Budget Discussion Work Session

March 23 – Public Hearing and City Council Budget Discussion Work Session; Consideration of Real Estate Tax Rate to be Advertised

April 6 – City Council Budget Discussion Work Session; FY2021 Quarterly Financial Review

April 20 – Public Hearings for Real Estate Tax Rate; Introduction of C&I and Wastewater Rates

April 27 – City Council Budget Discussion Work Session

May 5 – Special Council Meeting – Public Hearings: Budget, Rates and Levies; C&I and Wastewater; Budget Adoption

Meetings begin at 7 p.m. and are cablecast on Channel 12 (Cox and Verizon) and livestreamed on the city website.

Protect Our Drinking Water – Be Winter Salt Smart

Being "winter salt smart" protects freshwater resources without reducing safety.

- Consider "salt alternatives," such as kitty litter, sand, and other abrasive material.
- Limit the need for chemical deicers by shoveling snow early and often.
- Apply deicers according to manufacturers' instructions.
- Sweep up and save excess deicer to reuse for future snows.